

them some of the time he had hitherto allotted to his books, but he was not afraid of additional work, particularly when it was of a nature to bring him nearer to the Parisian stage, on which, in spite of every rebuff, he still dreamt of triumphing. Moreover, the increase in his income was very welcome ; with the salaries he received from " Le Bien Public " and "Le Semaphore" — for which he still wrote — the proceeds of his contributions to the Russian review, which some months amounted to eight hundred francs, and the money accruing from his books, his income, in the early part of 1876, before the serial publication of " L'Assommoir," represented quite twenty-five thousand francs, and perhaps thirty thousand francs a year.¹ But he decided to offer his new story to "Le Bien Public"; and that he could now command good terms is shown by the fact that the paper agreed to pay him ten thousand francs for the serial rights without even seeing his manuscript, which, by the way, was not ready, though he had given information respecting the subject he meant to treat.

The serial issue began in June (1876) and there was an immediate outcry. Whatever might be thought of Zola's novels in book form, they were not liked by the newspaper readers of those days; and, in the case of " L'Assom-

moir," there were not only complaints of immorality, but the author was accused, ludicrously enough, of slandering the masses, insulting the working classes. The latter charge alarmed the director of "Le Bien Public" far more than the first did. Important political issues were then at stake, and it was essential that the working-man should not be offended ! Of course people judged the story merely by

¹ From £1,000 to £1,200, or from \$5,000 to \$6,000.